

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
MIDDLE DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

Hillary Vogt, :
Plaintiff, : Civil Action No.: _____
v. :
Stellar Recovery, Inc.; and DOES 1-10, :
inclusive, : COMPLAINT
Defendant. :

For this Complaint, the Plaintiff, Hillary Vogt, by undersigned counsel, states as follows:

JURISDICTION

1. This action arises out of Defendant's repeated violations of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1692, et seq. ("FDCPA"), and the invasions of Plaintiff's personal privacy by the Defendant and its agents in their illegal efforts to collect a consumer debt.
2. Supplemental jurisdiction exists pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1337.
3. Venue is proper in this District pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331(b), in that the Defendants transact business in this District and a substantial portion of the acts giving rise to this action occurred in this District.

PARTIES

4. The Plaintiff, Hillary Vogt ("Plaintiff"), is an adult individual residing in Lewistown, Pennsylvania, and is a "consumer" as the term is defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(3).

5. Defendant Stellar Recovery, Inc. (“Stellar”), is a Florida business entity with an address of 1845 US Highway 93 S Ste 310, Kalispell, Montana 59901, operating as a collection agency, and is a “debt collector” as the term is defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(6).

6. Does 1-10 (the “Collectors”) are individual collectors employed by Stellar and whose identities are currently unknown to the Plaintiff. One or more of the Collectors may be joined as parties once their identities are disclosed through discovery.

7. Stellar at all times acted by and through one or more of the Collectors.

ALLEGATIONS APPLICABLE TO ALL COUNTS

A. The Debt

8. The Plaintiff incurred a financial obligation (the “Debt”) to an original creditor (the “Creditor”).

9. The Debt arose from services provided by the Creditor which were primarily for family, personal or household purposes and which meets the definition of a “debt” under 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(5).

10. The Debt was purchased, assigned or transferred to Stellar for collection, or Stellar was employed by the Creditor to collect the Debt.

11. The Defendants attempted to collect the Debt and, as such, engaged in “communications” as defined in 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(2).

B. Stellar Engages in Harassment and Abusive Tactics

12. Stellar has placed as many as five (5) calls a day to Plaintiff’s residential telephone in an attempt to collect the Debt.

13. On July 26, 2011, Stellar spoke with Plaintiff about the Debt.

14. Plaintiff explained to Stellar that she is a full-time student and cannot afford to pay the Debt now. Plaintiff advised Stellar that she will likely be able to afford to pay the Debt in the coming Fall.

15. Stellar responded to Plaintiff by telling her, "If I don't hear back from you [Plaintiff] within twenty-four (24) hours, then I will put a note in your file stating that you're refusing to pay [the Debt] and we'll take you to Court." No such action has been taken to date.

16. Further, Stellar told Plaintiff that she would have to pay the Debt immediately in Court.

17. Stellar used very rude and abusive language when speaking with Plaintiff. Stellar told Plaintiff, "Stop wasting my tax-payer dollars by going to school."

18. Stellar additionally told Plaintiff, "I'll find out what school you go to, which really won't be that hard, and I'm going to pull all of your funding."

19. Stellar has failed to send Plaintiff a "30-Day Validation Notice."

C. Plaintiff Suffered Actual Damages

20. The Plaintiff has suffered and continues to suffer actual damages as a result of the Defendants' unlawful conduct.

21. As a direct consequence of the Defendants' acts, practices and conduct, the Plaintiff suffered and continues to suffer from humiliation, anger, anxiety, emotional distress, fear, frustration and embarrassment.

22. The Defendants' conduct was so outrageous in character, and so extreme in degree, as to go beyond all possible bounds of decency, and to be regarded as atrocious, and utterly intolerable in a civilized community.

COUNT I

VIOLATIONS OF THE FDCPA 15 U.S.C. § 1692, et seq.

23. The Plaintiff incorporates by reference all of the above paragraphs of this Complaint as though fully stated herein.

24. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692d(2) in that Defendants used profane and abusive language when speaking with the consumer.

25. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692d(5) in that Defendants caused a phone to ring repeatedly and engaged the Plaintiff in telephone conversations, with the intent to annoy and harass.

26. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692e(2) in that Defendants misrepresented the character, amount and legal status of the debt.

27. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692e(5) in that Defendants threatened to take legal action, without actually intending to do so.

28. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692e(10) in that Defendants employed false and deceptive means to collect a debt.

29. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(1) in that Defendants failed to send the Plaintiff a validation notice stating the amount of the debt.

30. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(2) in that Defendants failed to send the Plaintiff a validation notice stating the name of the original creditor to whom the debt was owed.

31. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(3) in that Defendants failed to send the Plaintiff a validation notice stating the Plaintiff's right to dispute the debt within thirty days.

32. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(4) in that Defendants failed to send the Plaintiff a validation notice informing the Plaintiff of a right to have verification and judgment mailed to the Plaintiff.

33. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(5) in that Defendants failed to send the Plaintiff a validation notice containing the name and address of the original creditor.

34. The foregoing acts and omissions of the Defendants constitute numerous and multiple violations of the FDCPA, including every one of the above-cited provisions.

35. The Plaintiff is entitled to damages as a result of Defendants' violations.

COUNT II

**VIOLATIONS OF THE PENNSYLVANIA FAIR CREDIT EXTENSION
UNIFORMITY ACT, 73 P.S. § 2270, et seq.**

36. The Plaintiff incorporates by reference all of the above paragraphs of this Complaint as though fully stated herein.

37. The Plaintiff is a "consumer," as defined in 73 P.S. § 2270.3.

38. The Defendants are each individually a "debt collector" as defined in 73 P.S. § 2270.3.

39. The Defendants violated provisions of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1692, et seq., which constitutes an unfair or deceptive practice under 73 P.S. § 2270.4(a).

40. The Plaintiff is entitled to damages as a result of the Defendants' violations.

COUNT III

INVASION OF PRIVACY BY INTRUSION UPON SECLUSION

41. The Plaintiff incorporates by reference all of the above paragraphs of this Complaint as though fully stated herein.

42. The Restatement of Torts, Second, § 652(b) defines intrusion upon seclusion as, “One who intentionally intrudes...upon the solitude or seclusion of another, or his private affairs or concerns, is subject to liability to the other for invasion of privacy, if the intrusion would be highly offensive to a reasonable person.”

43. Pennsylvania further recognizes the Plaintiff’s right to be free from invasions of privacy, thus the Defendants violated Pennsylvania state law.

44. The Defendants intentionally intruded upon Plaintiff’s right to privacy by continually harassing Plaintiff with excessive phone calls and abusive language.

45. The telephone calls made by the Defendants to Plaintiff were so persistent and repeated with such frequency as to be considered, “hounding the plaintiff,” and, “a substantial burden to her existence,” thus satisfying the Restatement of Torts, Second, § 652(b) requirement for an invasion of privacy.

46. The conduct of the Defendants in engaging in the illegal collection activities resulted in multiple invasions of privacy in such a way as would be considered highly offensive to a reasonable person.

47. As a result of the intrusions and invasions, the Plaintiff is entitled to actual damages in an amount to be determined at trial from the Defendants.

48. All acts of the Defendants and its agents were committed with malice, intent, wantonness, and recklessness, and as such, the Defendants are subject to punitive damages.

COUNT IV

VIOLATIONS OF THE PENNSYLVANIA UNFAIR TRADE PRACTICES AND CONSUMER PROTECTION LAW, 73 P.S. § 201-1, et seq.

49. The Plaintiff incorporates by reference all of the above paragraphs of this Complaint as though fully stated herein.

50. The Defendants' violations of the Pennsylvania Fair Credit Extension Uniformity Act constitute per se violations under the Pennsylvania Unfair Trade Practices and Consumer Protection Law.

51. The Defendants' acts were done with malicious, intentional, willful, reckless, wanton and negligent disregard for Plaintiff's rights under the law.

52. As a result of the Defendants' violations, the Plaintiff has suffered ascertainable losses entitling the Plaintiff to actual, statutory and treble damages.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, the Plaintiff prays that judgment be entered against the Defendants:

1. Actual damages pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(a)(1) against the Defendants;
2. Statutory damages of \$1,000.00 pursuant to 15 U.S.C. §1692k(a)(2)(A) against the Defendants;
3. Costs of litigation and reasonable attorney's fees pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(a)(3) and 73 P.S. § 2270.5 against the Defendants;
4. Statutory damages pursuant to 73 P.S. § 2270.5(c);
5. Actual damages pursuant to 73 P.S. § 201-9.2(a);
6. Statutory damages pursuant to 73 P.S. § 201-9.2(a);
7. Treble damages pursuant to 73 P.S. § 201-9.2(a);
8. Actual damages from the Defendants for all damages including emotional

distress suffered as a result of the intentional, reckless, and/or negligent FDCPA violations and intentional, reckless, and/or negligent invasions of privacy in an amount to be determined at trial for the Plaintiff;

9. Punitive damages; and

10. Such other and further relief as may be just and proper.

TRIAL BY JURY DEMANDED ON ALL COUNTS

Dated: August 11, 2011

Respectfully submitted,

By /s/ Jody B. Burton

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